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By Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat

Every year from the more than 300 books we review on this website, we choose 50 "best spiritual books." These are titles that have most impressed and inspired us. Since we only review books that we want to recommend to you for your spiritual journey, this selection actually represents the best of the best. Through diverse approaches, drawing upon the wisdom and practices of the world's religions, these titles explore the quest for meaning and purpose, wholeness and healing, commitment and community, contemplation and social activism.

Our full list will be published in December, but the following books are so good, we already know they will be on it — so there's no point, we figure, in postponing the announcement.

We have organized this list by a major theme or

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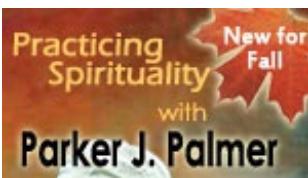
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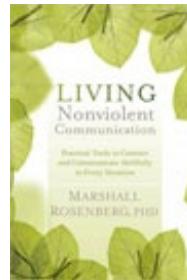
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spiritual practice covered in the book. These headings are just to make it easier for you to find the books you might be most interested in; they are not subcategories of the awards.

We congratulate the authors and publishers of these exceptional contributions to today's spiritual renaissance. Click on the title link to read the full review.

CONNECTIONS



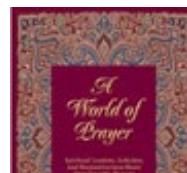
[***Living Nonviolent Communication: Practical Tools to Connect and Communicate Skillfully in Every Situation***](#) by Marshall Rosenberg (Sounds True) is a helpful explanation of the principles and the philosophy of nonviolent communication.

DEVOTION



[***India: A Sacred Geography***](#) by Diana Eck (Harmony Books) is a spellbinding survey of India's sacred places and the pilgrims who frequent them.

DEVOTION



[***A World of Prayer: Spiritual Leaders, Activists, and Humanitarians Share their Favorite Prayers***](#)



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Prayers by Rosalind Bradley (Orbis Books) is a top-drawer collection of multifaith prayers for many occasions.

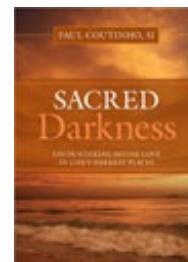


FAITH
Saints As They Really Are: Voices of Holiness in Our Time by Michael Plekon (University of Notre Dame Press) is the third in a series of books about

people of faith who put their spirituality to work in the world.

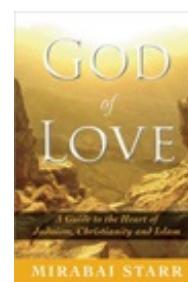
GRACE

Sacred Darkness: Encountering Divine Love in Life's Darkest Places by Paul Coutinho (Loyola Press) is an examination of the pervasive and important role of darkness in the spiritual life.



HOSPITALITY

God of Love: A Guide to the Heart of Judaism, Christianity and Islam by Mirabai Starr (Monkfish Book Publishing Company) celebrates the common wisdom streams of the world's three monotheistic traditions.



About the Database

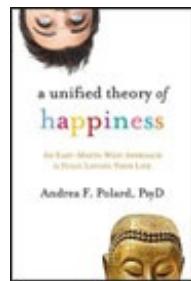
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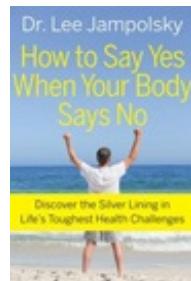
HOSPITALITY

[**The Huston Smith Reader**](#) by Huston Smith and Jeffrey Paine (University of California Press) is a wonderful crosscut of 60 years of writings by the renowned world religions scholar.



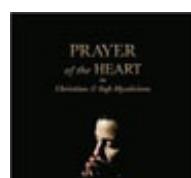
JOY

[**A Unified Theory of Happiness: An East-Meets-West Approach to Fully Loving Your Life**](#) by Andrea F. Polard (Sounds True) is a compelling map of the good things growing out of a synthesis of Western science and Eastern wisdom.



LOVE

[**How to Say Yes When Your Body Says No: Discover the Silver Lining in Life's Toughest Health Challenges**](#) by Lee Jampolsky (Hampton Roads Publishing) explains how to replace a fear-based consciousness with a life-centered consciousness.

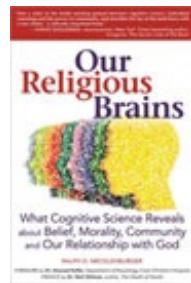


LOVE

[**Prayer of the Heart in Christian and Sufi Mysticism**](#) by Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee (The Golden Sufi

Center) is an inspiring treatise on what the mystical prayers of Christians and Sufis have in common.

MEANING



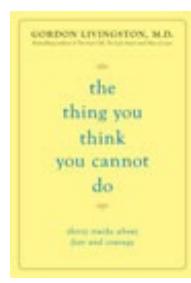
[*Our Religious Brains: What Cognitive Science Reveals About Belief, Morality, Community, and Our Relationship with God*](#) by Ralph D. Mecklenburger (Jewish Lights) is a rousing tribute to the important role of our brains in our spiritual journeys.

REVERENCE



[*Animals and World Religions*](#) by Lisa Kemmerer (Oxford University Press) is a helpful survey of the attitudes, practices, and core teachings about animals in the world's religions.

SHADOW

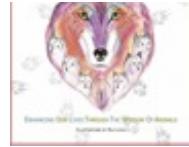


[*The Thing You Think You Cannot Do: Thirty Truths about Fear and Courage*](#) by Gordon Livingston (Da Capo/Lifelong Books) is a hard-hitting and timely collection of 30 essays of cultural criticism.

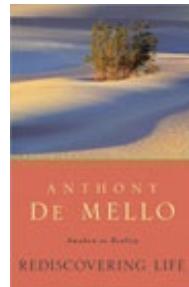
TEACHERS



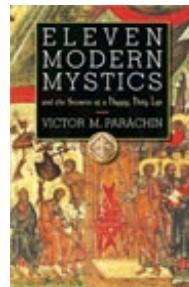
[*Animal Teachings: Enhancing Our*](#)



[Lives Through the Wisdom of Animals](#) by Dawn Brunke (CICO Books) is a beautifully illustrated resource on personal qualities we can learn from observing animal behaviors.



TRANSFORMATION
[Rediscovering Life: Awaken to Reality](#) by Anthony de Mello (Image Books) is a life-transforming book about freedom, contentment, and fearlessness.



X-THE MYSTERY
[Eleven Modern Mystics and the Secrets of a Happy, Holy Life](#) by Victor M. Parachin (Hope Publishing House) is an impressive book with an interspiritual flair and a deep appreciation for mysticism.



YOU
[The Fire Starter Sessions: A Soulful and Practical Guide to Creating Success on Your Own Terms](#) by Danielle LaPorte (Crown Archetype) is an exploration of the secrets of the American ideal of success that will change perspectives on the subject.

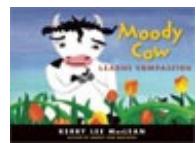


YOU

[When Women Were Birds: Fifty-Four Variations on Voice](#) by Terry

Tempest Willams (Sarah Crichton Books/Farrar, Straus & Giroux) is an astonishing memoir about the writer's quest to discover her own values and visions through a look at her mother's legacy.

Children's Books



COMPASSION

[Moody Cow Learns Compassion](#) by

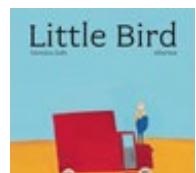
Kerry Lee MacLean (Wisdom Publications) is an outstanding children's book about two cows who discover the liberation in practicing empathy and caring for other beings.



FAITH

[Golden Domes and Silver Lanterns: A Muslim Book of Colors](#) by Hena

Khan (Chronicle Books) is an awe-inspiring children's book about beauty in Islam and the colors that pervade the everyday life of a young Muslim girl.



JOY

[Little Bird](#) by Germano Zullo

(Enchanted Lion Books) is a marvelous and captivating parable

about freedom, soul singing, and joy.



KINDNESS

[It's a ... It's a ... It's a Mitzvah](#) by Liz Suneby and Diane Heiman (Jewish Lights) is a playful book introducing kids to the abundant pleasures of being kind, doing good, and repairing the world.

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